

Beware of Scam and Fraud This Holiday Season

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BATON ROUGE, La. – Don't let a fraud or scam steal the joy of the holiday season from you. Be aware that con artists and criminals may try to steal money or personal information from you through fraud, scams or identity theft. Some may even pose as federal disaster workers.

If a person approaches you as a FEMA employee, always ask to see their badge. All FEMA representatives carry an identification badge with a photograph. A FEMA shirt or jacket is not proof of identity.

FEMA representatives do not ask for money from disaster survivors, or for payment for any services. They do not ask for information during unsolicited telephone calls or through email. FEMA will not contact you unless you have called FEMA first or applied for assistance.

FEMA representatives will ask for social security and bank account numbers when you apply for assistance and may ask for it again after you apply. Be cautious when giving this information to others who ask for it. Scam artists may pose as government officials, aid workers, or insurance company employees.

Other types of fraud which you may experience after a disaster:

- **Phony property inspections or inspectors:** FEMA inspectors will never ask for your registration number. No government disaster assistance official will call you to ask for your financial account information. If you doubt a FEMA representative is legitimate, hang up and call the FEMA Helpline at 800-621-3362 to report the incident.
- **Phony building contractors:** FEMA does not hire or endorse specific contractors to fix homes or recommend repairs. A FEMA housing inspector's job is to verify damage. Always hire a reputable engineer, architect or building official to inspect your home. An unethical contractor may create damage to get work.



To report scams, fraud and identity-theft contact: FEMA's toll-free Disaster Fraud Hotline at 866-720-5721; the Office of the Attorney General Consumer Protection Section, P.O. Box 94005, Baton Rouge, LA 70804-9005, fax: 225-326-6499; Louisiana State Licensing Board for Contractors at <https://arlspublic.lslbc.louisiana.gov/Home/Index>; or local law enforcement agencies.



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